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WRC-TV

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WOULD RESCUE AMERICANS UNDER MARK AND REPRISAL LETTERToday at 7:00 A.M. over WRC-TV (Washington) and the NBC-TV Network:

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DAVE GARROWAY AND LYLE H. MUNSON WERE SEEN SEATED TOGETHER IN A STUDIO SETTING.

GARROWAY: "During the past few weeks, the plight of Americans held captive in a number of foreign countries has shocked many people in this country. In Cuba, in East Germany, in Soviet Russia, Americans have been held against their will, and it seems that there is very little that we can do about it. But our guest now believes there is something we can do about it, and he has taken definite steps in that direction. I want you to meet Mr. Lyle H. Munson, a book publisher and distributor here in New York, who has petitioned the Congress for a letter of mark and reprisal, under the provision of the Constitution which authorizes Congress to commission privateers to engage in warfare against pirates.

"Mr. Munson, first of all, I'd like to quote that provision, if I may, from the Constitution, just to make this all legal, it's from Article I, Section VIII, Paragraph II, and it says the Congress shall have the power to declare war, grant letters of mark and reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water. Now, would you explain, sir, just what a letter of mark and reprisal is?"

MUNSON: "Well, historically, Mr. Garroway, a letter of mark and reprisal has been used to commission individuals or businessmen engaged in international trade to protect their interests while they are at sea or outside the confines of the United States. Historically, this practice came into being during the Revolutionary period when our own Navy was not of sufficient strength to protect the interests of American citizens upon the high seas."

GARROWAY: "Well, I know the Congress authorized the President to grant such letters of mark during the Civil War, but there's no record of it being used, and with the growth of modern navies, there's nothing of that kind lately. What justifies reviving this old usage?"

MUNSON: "Well, among other things, we have a situation in which reports come out of Cuba, published in the press in this country, in which Mr. Castro is quoted as saying that American citizens being held hostage in his camp there are the best possible insurance against air bombardment, or 55 millimeter shells falling in his camp."

GARROWAY: "In the past, recipients of letters of mark usually operated privateers, that is, individual vessels, as pirates. At least the Oxford dictionary says that their acts would actually be otherwise condemned as piracy, in fact. Doesn't that place you outside of the protection of law?"

MUNSON: "Yes, under a letter of mark and reprisal, any action is undertaken at the private risk and personal risk and expense of the individual, and the question has been raised by the press that it would not be possible for the United States government in any way to support or come to the rescue of any individual who might get in an expedition such as I propose undertaking. I have pointed out to the press, and I should like to point out here, that the

executive branch of the government has not been very successful in effecting the release of those who are not being held; perhaps it would be necessary for other fellow-Americans after me to get another letter of mark and reprisal to come after us if we should be captured or held."

GARROWAY: "Well, you sent your petition to Congress just a week ago, I believe, a week or so ago. What kind of reception did you get?"

MUNSON: "Speaker Rayburn wrote, on July 1, that the petition has been referred to the appropriate committee of the House of Representatives, and this suggests to me at least that hearings will be held in the immediate future. I'm very hopeful that that will be the case."

GARROWAY: "Has there been any response from the public at large on this?"

MUNSON: "Yes. I've had a great many telephone calls, letters, telegrams. I think the most interesting phone call was one from Sydney, Australia, at 6:30 the day before yesterday, on which occasion a gentleman representing to speak for 50 Australian men with military backgrounds volunteered the services of these 50 to join in any expedition which our Congress might authorize."

GARROWAY: "And here are some cards and telegrams right here which engage other volunteers in that same thing, as we can see."

A TELEGRAM WAS SEEN IN CLOSE-UP. THE SIGNATURE
WAS BLACKED OUT.

GARROWAY: "You have enough, then, for a crew of a ship."

MUNSON: "Oh, I should say, enough for a crew of several ships, and in the present context, it would seem to me that a man of war or the vessel of a privateer might take the form of an aeroplane, a PT boat, helicopter, or any combination of these, and any other instrument or vessel, or means of conveyance which is used in international trade."

GARROWAY: "You wouldn't have to have a big warship, necessarily?"

MUNSON: "Oh, I think not at all. It could assume any of these aspects, and as I have pointed out to the press, in earlier conversations, I think primarily here, in terms of implementing liaison with underground groups that are known to exist in those areas where Americans are now being held hostage. I should like, if I might, to make this one point: I'm interested here in focusing American attention on this problem, not alone because of the Americans that are now being held, but because of those who might be seized in many areas of the country and of the world: I in my business serve 109 countries. There are Americans living in all of these, and unless we in some manner demonstrate that we take this matter very seriously, where is thing going to stop, and who is to say that some petty pirate is not going to seize American citizens and hold them hostage in any one of many countries in the immediate future."

GARROWAY: "Well, I know that you're very serious about this. You served, I believe, in the CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, and the Office of Strategic Services. Is that Not right?"

GARROWAY: "When and where did you serve?"

MUNSON: "Well, during Berlin airlift time I served in Berlin and on the continent of Europe, later during the Korean war period I served in Formosa, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Manila, that area of the world."

GARROWAY: "Do you have any ideas, and can you give them to us now on how a letter of mark and reprisal can be used most effectively?"

MUNSON: "Well, again, I think immediately of the Berlin situation, where we know that the Americans are being held in a building which is literally within a stone's throw of the American sector. Now, I'm sure that liberation of these Americans would not be a major military task, and a couple of squads of volunteers could effect this. Might I make this one point? If American citizens were being held as political prisoners in Washington, D.C., by the administration today, every newspaper in the United States would be protesting this with great vigor and violence. Should we, as Americans, and should the press, protest the less violently, when American citizens are being held by our enemies?"

GARROWAY: "What has caused this situation? Why are we having citizens held in foreign countries?"

MUNSON: "Well, it seems to me that we have a pattern here, which probably reflects the Soviet conspiracy or Soviet direction. It's extraordinary that here at this juncture in our history, all of a sudden we have Americans being held in five different countries, and my whole attempt here is seriously to propose to the Congress that since the executive branch has not acted, Congress on its own right can. No other President in American history ever has tolerated this kind of indignity upon American citizens for so long. As a pre-Eisenhower Republican I cannot conceive that Harry Truman or Franklin D. Roosevelt or certainly Teddy Roosevelt did not tolerate this kind of thing; I don't think our executive should now."

GARROWAY: "I wonder what's causing the situation to be as it is? Why is it tolerated? Is there some reason for that? Are we afraid of starting a war, a limited war, or a big nuclear war, if we go rescue somebody?"

MUNSON: "Well, I have the impression that this is an atmosphere of acquiescence in which we have lived for some time. I personally have no fear of any shooting war growing out of any attempt to release these individuals. The Soviets are winning without a shooting war, so why should they shoot?"

GARROWAY: "Well, yes, that's true, so far. However, they might shoot the individuals involved in going in on a rescue squad, such as you point out in Berlin."

MUNSON: "Well, I spent some time in areas of the world where I had to conclude there are things worse than being shot or being dead. In the Far East those hideous refugees from China, particularly, many of them were wishing that they were dead. This is much worse than being dead."

GARROWAY: "Thank you, very much, Mr. Munson. We admire your sincerity in this issue."

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MUNSON: "I appreciate your having me."

CARRWAY: "Thank you, sir. Mr. Munson talked about getting a letter of mark and reprisal, to regain the freedom of American citizens being held captive in five countries of the world this morning, at this moment."